

The Christian Community

JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY RELIGION

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OBJECTS

- To foster Christian unity.
- To help communities unite local churches.
- To plan community programs.
- To hold conferences.
- To foster and promote fellowship for community religion.
- To help reduce competition and overlapping of effort.
- To place co-operation above competition.

Members in Every State
Service Bureau for Churches and Ministers
Uniting Churches
Promoting Community Programs
Publicity on Church Unity

The Field Secretary's Corner

MORE AND MORE does the conviction grow that today the need is great for the kind of religion that Jesus expressed and exemplified. In defining or describing it one would need to include two basic principles, unselfishness and a distinctive love of people. An unselfishness without counting the cost in personal discomforts, and a love that is free from ulterior motives. Any claim to personal salvation should be examined in the light of these two dynamic characteristics of the religion of Jesus.

During the last three weeks I have been talking about this matter with individuals and groups. It is a language that everyone seems to understand. Indeed one man confessed, "I have been a good church-member for 23 years, and I'm still selfish and I don't love people."

There are 143 community, federated and union churches in Massachusetts. In response to a letter four great needs are disclosed: A clearer understanding of what is meant by "community" religion; the necessity of an adequate community program; economic assistance; and in many instances, the desire on the part of the minister to change to another field.

Our first regional conference will face these problems. Rev. Ivan S. Nowlan, of Stow, who wisely and ably directed the Massachusetts Sunday School Union

for many years will be the chairman of the group meetings. Mr. Nowlan is the present Moderator of the Massachusetts Community Churches. Two other regional meetings are planned for the immediate future—one in Eastern Massachusetts, and one in the Springfield area.

What a fine group of men there are leading Massachusetts churches! From the Council under the leadership of Dr. Jennings to the man in the smallest parish there is inspiration in their co-operative spirit and willingness to advise and help. Dr. Root, so long a servant of God in the old Bay State, gave me a great vision, and the loving enthusiasm of his wife was not a little part of it.

On Sunday, October 25, I was at the Community Church of Boston. The fifteen hundred people who were in attendance bore testimony to the gifted leadership of Dean Clarence R. Skinner, the Church's founder. Unfortunately the pressure of Dr. Skinner's work at the Divinity School at Tuft's College caused him to relinquish his work at Boston, and an able young leader has been chosen as his successor, the Rev. Donald Lothrop. This church believes in and practices community religion. I suspect I will have occasion to refer to its work again and again.

Last Sunday, Nov. 1st, I spoke to an enthusiastic congregation at the Immanuel Church of Westerleigh, Staten Island; one of the oldest inter-denominational churches in the country. Organized in 1894! What a vision those founders had! It is now effectively functioning under the capable ministry of Walter Mueller. After graduating from Union Seminary in New York, Walter and his young bride went as missionaries to Egypt. The depression called them back, and what is Cairo's loss is Staten Island's gain.

A live and loyal group of men and women were again on hand in the afternoon to plan for and promote the new budget. Their determination and intelligent good-will insures its success. Bill Halle, a two-fisted Christian, is the directive genius of the campaign, and I have a suspicion that this church will before long make its mother parent organization, The Community Church Workers, its chief object of missionary giving. Churches with community vision see this as the avenue

(Continued on page Five)

Who's Who

Our cover cut is loaned to us through the courtesy of the United Air Lines, and shows a view of Los Angeles, California, as seen from one of their planes.

Rev. N. A. McCune is pastor of the People's Church of East Lansing, Michigan, ministering to college students.

Dr. Edward Scribner Ames, is minister of the University Church of Disciples of Christ, and Dean of the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago.

Prof. Alva W. Taylor serves in the School of Religion, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn. as professor of Social Ethics.

Rev. Lincoln MacKenzie is serving as executive and field secretary of Community Church Workers.

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A Journal of Community Religion

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Vol. III

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THANKSGIVING 1936

THOUGH closely following one of the bitterest political campaigns in the history of our nation, and though at a time when the world is darkly shadowed by the threat of war, Americans can find just cause for a national Thanksgiving. Though this campaign brought out into the open some of the more sinister forces in American life, election day revealed the capacity of the people for independent judgment and wise discrimination,—capacities that augur well for the maintenance of popular government. To be sure the result of the election was in no sense a party, class, or sectional victory. It was an expression of popular will remarkable in its unanimity. Party idols were tumbled from their pedestals, party loyalties broken, and in this is seen the promise of the remaking of our major parties, basing them on real differences of principle and conviction. In the present uncertain state of the world it is well, indeed, to have the reassurance that the masses of our people are not to be easily thrown into panic by "red", "atheistic", "pay-envelope" and other scares. The people refused to be stampeded. And regretting as we must the absence of any well knit party of the opposition we must all rejoice that the people are still beyond the reach of the methods of "moral terrorism" as practiced in this campaign.

And also, as a people, we are more realistic in our thinking. We are more ready to face our common problem. We are more critical of the prevailing economic and political orthodoxies. There is a new sense of common life. To be told that depressions must come and we are to sit by while "nature takes its course" no longer satisfies. We must do something about it, that we know. We must work with common purpose and a united strength. The government must be made the effective servant of the people's will. It is their instrument. It must provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare. America is not to be a vast preserve where man is to strive against his fellow practicing the ethics of the hunt or the pack. It is to be a socialized community of reciprocal rights and duties. As to how rapidly that socialization is to take place and in what forms it is to find expression none can say. Upon these things there will be differences of opinion, conflicting views, clashing concepts. But no matter. The people are demanding a more democratic way of life. And there seems to be a willingness upon the part of the people to be patient while experiments are tried, a tolerance for

mistakes that may be made, and a readiness to keep confidence while purposes are faithfully pursued for the well-being of all the people.

The difficulties and problems ahead are many. There are powerful groups that will not yield without a struggle. But the people have spoken. Sovereignty is with them. And the march of the human spirit cannot long be halted.

Let us gather then on this Thanksgiving Day 1936 in our places of worship in penitence and thanksgiving, bowing in gratitude to God who wills the good of all his children. Let us there pledge our lives anew to the fulfillment of the American Dream, a free Republic of free men. There let us dedicate ourselves to such labors and disciplines that those who come after us will cherish our memory as men worthy of their day.

Did It Mean Anything?

ARMISTICE DAY has now come and gone again. What did it mean? We kept two minutes of silence, remembering our soldier dead. We recalled those days when the boys of the world were being sent to the shambles. We gathered, perhaps, in our places of assembly, where speeches were made and prayers were said; where stirring music was heard and banners and flags were displayed. We visited the graves where our remembered sleep now long unmindful of a world where men wage war upon their fellows and where war's horrors multiply and human hatreds continue. We observed Armistice Day, then back again to make money and spend it, to teach and to learn, to preach and to pray. But what did "keeping Armistice Day" do to us? Did we turn from those who fought a war to end war only to make new machines to fight new wars? Though the slums remain, though children are without sufficient clothes and go unfed we spend our wealth for new machines for killing. The nations wildly rearm. No mind, no home in Europe is free from fear of war. Mothers look wistfully into the faces of their sons dreading the day when they shall be sent to the slaughter as were the lads of twenty years ago.

Have the foundations for a world of law been destroyed? Must we all go to the side of the big battalions? On Armistice Day did we still reaffirm the patterns of patriotism and cultivate the temper that begets war? Have we not yet learned that wars are futile? Do we believe that by war a just peace can be estab-

lished? Is it that our faith in God is gone? Do we say that violence has been successful? And are we ready now to make its strategy ours?

Or did we on Armistice Day in remembrance of our dead accept for ourselves the disciplines of peace? Are we preparing ourselves in mind and spirit to stand against the hysteria that carries peoples into war? Are we seeking in our churches and schools to build up in the minds of youth the patterns of peace? Are we building minds to resist the tides of unreflective emotionalism that can be so quickly aroused by the techniques made possible by science and invention? Are we seeking to build peace into the whole of the relationships of men and women in our machine driven world? Are we striving to build peace into the dreams and imaginations of men and women, developing in every community makers of peace?

In that two minutes of silence on that day of remembrance did there come to us some touch of wisdom making us wise in the ways of peace and strong and valiant to work therein?

A Business That Has Learned Nothing

WITH flowery promises from the politicians of a new order of things, prohibition was voted out and a new regime for the control of liquor sales was voted in. In many states of this country the new order is the worst in history. In Chicago young women are hired to dispense liquor in the saloons, and given a percentage on what they sell. Even hardened patrons of these places are often shocked at what they see.

A few liquor dealers, fearing that some new wave of reform will start have protested this practice but without avail. The tavern with the better standards finds competition with the lower type grog-shop difficult.

There is no wonder, therefore, that precinct after precinct in Chicago is voting out all the taverns. The leading suburbs around the city, especially on the north side, have gone dry. Under a state law drawn by the liquor men, it is very hard to vote a precinct dry. But with all the dice loaded for the wets, the dries sometimes win.

In Illinois and many other states the old alliance of the tavern with prostitution and gambling is back again. The most liberal laws about closing are openly flaunted. The liquor business is not respectable because it seeks alliance with the lowest practices of human beings, and has no respect for even the most reasonable laws.

The motor casualties that can be traced to drunken drivers are large in number. A judge in Chicago imposes jail sentences on several of these every day. Not only does the tavern keeper violate the law; the habitual drinker violates the laws of common sense by annoying many and occasionally killing some. The logic of such a situation will one of these days lead to some drastic changes.

Moving Toward A Community Church

THE NUMBER of requests coming in for information about starting a community or federated church would seem to indicate that a new opportunity is coming for the community church movement. Many of these correspondents inquire about the way to start a movement toward consolidation or about making a single church in a village acceptable to all the people of the community.

Like any new movement, this one will need leadership. A very few people of leadership in a community can start a town talking about a better alignment of religious forces. In one town, the editor started printing news of near-by community churches. This started people talking. In another town a series of cottage meetings attended by leading people of two churches led to a consolidation. Eventually the advantages of having a single church in a village must be expounded to the whole community either in a public meeting, by means of tracts or by a friendly front door visitor.

The shaping up of a definite plan is assisted by consulting sample constitutions of other churches. There is no one standard constitution, but a study of various plans may lead to the formulation of a program of action adapted to the local community.

From the outset the convictions and loyalties of all the people must be respected. An interdenominational or union program of missionary activity is indicated. The selection of the right preacher for the new church is a critical procedure. Unless he really believes in a united church, he may wreck it. To guide such new enterprises is one of the functions of the Community Church Workers.

Prosperity and Worship

FOR MANY years Roger Babson, the statistician, has contended that there is a relationship between the national prosperity and church attendance. Six years ago he began collecting attendance statistics from Congregational churches, approximately a thousand of them. The figures are now in, and they indicate that these churches did increase in attendance until 1933 when a decline set in. However, the fluctuation is not as large as one might have assumed. It might even be accounted for in considerable measure by the greater amount of travel in prosperous times.

One cannot doubt, however, that in times when a lot of easy money is available there is a great increase of interest in the material things of life and a corresponding decrease of interest in the exercises of the spirit. A long time ago it was said, "Ye cannot serve both God and mammon."

The thesis of a school of old testament prophets was that prosperity made men forget God. Then came sin and the punishment of sin. This was followed by repentance and reformation. But repentance brought back prosperity once more. Thus a philosophy of history was

built up by this school of the prophets. It was modified by the Wisdom writer who gave us the book of Job. Not all adversity is the result of the punishment of sin, he contended.

The kind of prosperity that we often get in America is a sinful prosperity. So far as it rests upon war profits, the exploitation of labor, speculation in blue sky securities and similar methods, it is prosperity achieved at the sacrifice of human welfare. Punishment follows this sin like winter follows autumn.

The Aftermath of the Election

THE NATION has settled down rather quickly after the election to its ordinary activities. Probably even the Democrats did not anticipate the landslide that has swept Franklin Delano Roosevelt back into power. The action of the electorate was decisive, and no one can longer doubt that the American people are headed out toward a lot of change in the political and economic structure of the nation.

However, the stock market took the whole matter without panic. A wave of selling was quickly absorbed, and there has been no evidence of weakness in the market since. Wise business men know that government has less to do with economics than campaign orators claim.

The church people have viewed the struggle this year with mixed feelings. Catholics have been called to repudiate the administration by such outstanding leaders as Al Smith and Father Coughlin. Protestants have had no comparable leaders opposed to the President but without doubt many have felt their admiration for the administration wane as they noted the vast sums spent for preparedness and the inept way in which the government has met post-prohibition problems.

On the other hand many of the social objectives that have been expounded by the churches for years have found fulfilment in this administration. The churches have insisted upon a better treatment of labor and have been opposed to child labor.

Some of these objectives still lack fulfilment, but so far as the administration progresses in making industry more humane and society more just in its treatment of the underprivileged it will have the support of church people who believe in their own declared principles.

A More Intelligent Church

ACROSS AMERICA the National Preaching Mission is calling churches to a renewed energy in their fundamental task of preaching the gospel. The pulpit is used for a good many other purposes in a year. We have so many special Sundays when various causes ask to be heard that the age-long task of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ is often obscured. Religion needs more time to be heard. The Sunday evening service has been dropped in many communities as well as the

mid-week prayer meeting. A half hour a week of religious teaching is by no means enough, even though every Sunday morning were devoted to the main religious themes.

Not only do the churches need more time for the preaching of the gospel; they need a new urgency. The preaching of the gospel rightly calls for a decision. Unless this new note comes into the preaching, many churches will remain sterile institutions, gradually dwindling in membership.

There can be no doubt that the present generation of church members needs a better intelligence on religious themes. The religious illiteracy of church members is a striking and alarming fact. Religion has a history, a literature and a systematic formulation. It also has a program of action. About all of these there should be a greater understanding.

Should the National Preaching Mission degenerate in any community to the level of the older revivalism, it will fail. It must be educational in method, reasonable in its appeals, and socially-minded in its outlook. Conducted in this way, it may bring to the churches of America a great new awakening of interest and a finer outlook.

Field Secretary's Corner

(Continued from page Two)

through which their influence and ideals are extended over all the country.

Fifty-five young people on the same Sunday evening were a revelation of Mr. Mueller's fine counsel and leadership. They are doing things with their religion! I shall have more to write of them later.

Last Monday Albert Allinger toured me around Hudson and Bergen Counties. Here is a region in which a regional conference will be held in the early spring. One of the fine spirits is Rev. George Tamke, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church at Union City, the present President of the Hudson County ministerial association. Then there is Rev. David Van Strien, pastor of the Woodcliff Community Church (Dutch Reformed), who reads *The Christian Community*, and practices its religious principles! In the same region is that old warrior Allan MacNeill whose *Union Herald* ever challenges Ridgefield Park to do the things which our Lord commended. Over in Radburn is my old mate Bedros Apelian the recent successor of Deane Edwards in this model modern suburban community. Apelian has the stuff and vision that such an exemplary community as Radburn needs to interpret once more the religion of the spirit.

And now back to New England, Columbus and Buffalo of which I shall have a lot to write about in the December issue, and until then,

Cheerio,

The Field Secretary.

ONE ALWAYS NEEDS THREE FRIENDS

By N. A. McCune

THERE ARE friends who play at friendship; and there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." —Proverbs 18:24 (American Translation.)

The small boy who said, "A friend is a fellow who knows all about you and still likes you," had it about right. It is evident that we each need such a friend, and equally evident that we should each be one. The student who makes one lasting friendship has not attended college in vain. Many of the enduring values of life come out of friendship, as flowers come out of the soil.

Go back a few years when we were all reading "Evangeline" in school. This is how Longfellow came to write it. One evening he and his friend Hawthorne were sitting in Longfellow's home in Cambridge, and Hawthorne told the poet a story which he had heard from a French Canadian. The settlers living in Acadia were summoned to hear a proclamation. When they came, the men were seized and shipped off to be distributed throughout New England. One of the men thus sent away was a bridegroom who had been married the day before. His bride spent years seeking him and never gave up the quest until she found him on his death bed, and from the shock she also died. The result of this story was Evangeline. Without friendships literature would be poor indeed.

When Michael Pupin wrote his memoirs, "From Immigrant to Inventor," a few years ago, he devoted several pages to a German named Bilharz. Bilharz worked in the engine room in the factory where Pupin worked. He was a philosopher in overalls. He gave the raw Serbian immigrant his first lessons in Americanism. Together they studied the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Gettysburg Address until Pupin knew these documents by heart. Bilharz also taught his young friend Greek and Latin so well, that when Pupin took the entrance examinations into Columbia University he passed with such high marks that he was given free tuition. Said the famous inventor, "There was no person in the United States that glorious day happier than I." And it all sprang out of friendship.

For centuries people have read of Damon and Phintias. Phintias was unjustly condemned to death by the tyrant king of Sicily. Shortly before he was to die he received permission to go away to arrange his affairs, on condition that Damon would remain as a pledge until his return. The day of execution came, but Phintias did not appear. Damon was being led to the place of execution, and the people along the way giped him for his credulity. When the place of execution was reached, Phintias rushed through the crowd into the arms of his friend. Each man demanded the right to be executed for the other. The king approached, par-

doned Phintias on condition that he be received as the third member of this undying friendship.

Out of the past come such stories as that; stories that make us say, "Well, they ought to be true, whether they are or not." Probably the reason there are not more of such instances of steadfastness today is, that we are all so busy going somewhere, and then turning around and coming back. Here is another. King Richard, called the lion-hearted, was taken prisoner in Germany while returning from the Holy Land. For months no one knew where he was, but at last he was found by Blondel, a troubadour. It seems that the king and the minstrel had composed a song between them, each singing alternate verses. The king would sing one, then the troubadour the next. Only the two men knew the song. When the king was taken prisoner the minstrel set out to find him. He wandered through many kingdoms and sang the first stanza of the song—sang it at all sorts of doors and castles and prisons, but there was no response. It was evident that the king was not within.

But one day Blondel sang it at the right place. From within came a voice that he knew, singing the second stanza of the song. The heart of the minstrel leaped. He knew that verse. To make certain he sang the third verse and from inside came the fourth verse. He had found the king.

The very churches in which we worship are here because people have believed in each other. Our Lord had three men in whom he confided. Paul's long and wearisome missionary journeys were lightened by the companionship of Luke the physician. Peter could always rely on the faithful partnership of Mark. The Reformation which started Protestantism on its way was born in the comradeship of Luther and Melancthon. John Knox gave Scotland a new birth of religion because he knew John Calvin. What would Abraham Lincoln have done without Joshua Speed? Make one friend in college. Be a friend to someone in college. That is religion. Jesus said, "I have called you friends."

The second of the three friends one needs is himself. That sounds funny and is not. Many people are not friends to themselves. They are their own enemies. This is vital, for you cannot get away from yourself. One may rush off to California to change one's environment, but that same old self will go right along with him, like the gold filling in his teeth. To be a friend to oneself does not mean that one should be vain, like that German army officer who always took off his own hat every time he referred to himself. But that inner content, that feeling of confidence in oneself, that faith in Some One Greater than oneself, is as necessary as breathing. Sir Edward Dyer wrote:

"My mind to me a kingdom is,

Such present joys I therein find,
That it excels all earthly bliss
That earth affords or grows by kind."

Contrast that happy mind with one pictured by Poe,
"The Haunted Palace":

"In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace,—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion
It stood there;
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

"Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A winged odor went away.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And around about his home the glory
The glory that blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed."

Something like that may happen to any one who is
at war with himself.

Be a friend to yourself. Have peace within the
castle walls of your own mind. There was Bill Cunningham.
He was so badly burned that one leg was three
inches shorter than the other. But if Bill Cunningham's
leg did not work right, his mind did. He was a friend
to himself. He began to run. He ran to school and he
ran from school. The burnt leg began to lengthen. This
summer he won the 1,500 meter race at Randall's Stadium,
New York. He could have said with Sir Edward
Dyer, "My mind to me a kingdom is."

Here is a young man who learned to become his
own friend. He was an orphan and at fourteen he ran
away. Timid and easily thwarted, in order to appear big
and strong he committed a robbery. He was sentenced
to two years in prison. When he came out he was more
depressed and defeated than ever. When alone he
would dream of the big things he would do some day,
but he never did them. One day he met a Y. M. C. A.
man and related his sad story. The "Y" man told him
that in the eyes of God he had great possibilities, and
that God had a plan for his life. He learned about
Christ, the Master of men. The result of it all: a personality
re-made; one that rose above the handicaps of
youth. He became a friend to himself because he
learned of the Unseen Friend. He started high school

and completed high school and college in six years, and
is now a strong, useful Christian man.

That naturally brings us to the third of these three
friends. We have already named him. He is the Friend
one never sees—not in this life. Can you find that
Friend in college? Some people say you can't. They
say that the moment a student enters one of the state
institutions of learning, it is good-bye to religion. There
is only one thing the matter with that statement. It is
not true. The Unseen Friend is here. You will find
Him in the trees and the beauty of the campus, provid-
ing you look for Him. Elizabeth Barrett Browning was
right when she said:

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;
The rest sit 'round and pluck blackberries."

You will find this Friend in the laboratory, again on
condition that you want to find Him. A laboratory, as
Agassiz said, is as sacred as a church. The great Com-
panion is seen when you look through the microscope at
the geometric lines in the cross-section of a leaf stem;
when you study biology and consider the laws of heredi-
ty; when you look into physics and observe how gravita-
tion works; when you consider the migration of birds,
yes, even when you study the weather. Emerson mused
one day:

"The gods talk in the breath of the woods,
They talk in the broken pine,
And fill the long reach of the old sea-beach
With dialogue divine."

The moment one speaks of the Friend Unseen he
thinks of Christ. Of all the students in the college
probably very few would be there if they had never
heard of Christ. How can one make Christ real? That
is the question for each of us to solve. It can be done.
It has been done countless times. Any one can do it.
As a matter of fact Christ is being made real all the
time. Art works at it. A recent portrait of the Christ
shows Him, not as the crucified, but as crucified and
arisen, Christ Triumphant.

Literature has presented Him uncounted times.
That great Christian soul, Dr. Charles M. Sheldon, wrote
"In His Steps," and more copies of it have been sold
than any American book ever written. Down across the
years has come the Arthurian legend, which Tennyson
put into the Idyls of the King. Modern writers have
much to say about this immortal Friend. Witter Bynner
writes of His beauty:

A poet lived in Galilee
Whose mother dearly knew him
And his beauty like a cooling tree
Drew many people to him.

Richard Le Gallienne dwells upon His immediate
presence:

"Loud mockers in the roaring street
Say Christ is crucified again:

Twice pierced his gospel-bearing feet
Twice broken his great heart in vain.
"I hear and to myself I smile,
For Christ talks with me all the while."

Edna St. Vincent Millay describes "The Little Hill":

"Oh, here the air is sweet and still,
And soft-s the grass to lie on;
And far away's the little hill
They took for Christ to die on.

The moon that saw Gethsemane,
I watch it rise and set;
It has so many things to see,
They help it to forget.

But little hills at home

So many hundred years,
Remember Greece, remember Rome,
Remember Mary's Tears."

But after all, the Unseen Friend must be found each for himself. That is the beauty of the religion of experience. And He is present in the service of worship in the church; present in the classes; found in the Sunday evening student gatherings; seen in the activities of the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A.; blessing the church "fun nights"; felt in the retreats by the shore of some quiet lake; leader in the student teams which go to other churches. Yes, he is present for you, for all of us, if we will receive Him as our friend, the mightiest of the three which one always needs.

(An address to college students that was issued as a tract to be given new students of Mich. State College.)

THE BASIS OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Edward Scribner Ames

COMMUNITY Churches constitute an interesting and significant development in American Christianity. They represent a revision of the basis of church membership, or, it may be said they have developed a new type of association in church life. That is, they accept for their membership members of any of the recognized churches of whatever tradition. Perhaps, better still, it may be said they represent a wider range of service by the church to all members of the community. Few of them, I suppose, go as far as the church of John Haynes Holmes in New York which makes residence in the community the condition of active participation in the church life. Most community churches assume that those who seek membership shall have been identified with some of the traditional denominations.

It may be a weakness in the community churches that they are often created under the pressure of economic conditions. In many places the separate churches have been so reduced in numbers and financial strength that they have sought cooperation in spite of differences. These churches sometimes give the impression of representing Christianity at a low ebb since in the past during greater prosperity they did not seek such close cooperation. They seem to have reached the point where their existence depends upon a neglect of what in their more orthodox days the individuals would have held important. In some cases it may even be true that they have reached a minimum of conscious attention to any vital religious experience, requiring no pronounced belief or commitment for fellowship among them.

On the other hand, the significance of these community churches does lie in the form of the union they achieve and in the attempts they make to meet the living needs of their people. They have seldom sought to render any service by new interpretations of Christiani-

ty unless it is the negative one of minimizing doctrine and belief.

It may be these churches are approaching a time when it will be required of them to formulate more clearly the principle upon which they build and serve. It seems to me that the community churches and, also, the churches in the various denominations, are being brought to the point where they can consistently stress only one condition of membership, namely, sympathy with the ideals and work of the church, or, in another form of statement, sympathy with the spirit of Christian teaching and a desire to further it in the world. The essence of the Christian religion in such a development would be simply the attempt to promote the good life as it has come to be conceived by Christian people.

My own conviction grows that it would be a definite advantage if local churches of all denominations sought the cooperation of all persons who are in sympathy with the practical work and general spirit of the organization. This would still leave opportunity for churches of different names to continue the characteristics of their traditional practice, but without the assumption that these matters made them superior to other Christians or gave them any exclusive rights in the spiritual life either here or hereafter. In this view every local church attempting this method and this basis of membership would become, actually a union church and would be able in full consistency and sincerity to cooperate with other local congregations in their own community and, conceivably, all such churches would be favorable to closer denominational cooperation in the national and international life. Such a view requires the local church, as the ultimate unit of organization, to be conceived in such a way that it becomes in spirit and work organic with every other Christian congregation.

As a matter of fact, there are communities in which the local churches are already operating on such a basis. In my own community a person may become a member of any of the evangelical Protestant bodies on declaration of his sympathy with the congregation which he seeks to join. Members may, theoretically at least, and in some cases actually do pass from one church to another without difficulty. These various congregations have cooperated through a council of churches for more than thirty years. They have conducted union meetings and have celebrated the high days of the church year such as Thanksgiving and Holy Week with the fullest harmony. This happy relationship has made a deep impression on the whole community and represents what seems to me to be the achievement of actual and vital Christian union. The extension of such practices in local churches in various communities would go far to overcome the hindrances to union and efficiency throughout American Christianity.

This process would also give significance to community churches wherever they might be established

for it would represent the ideal achievement if they made conscious to themselves the real basis of their organization. It would also make a community church of every denominational congregation in so far as each congregation would require essentially the same basis for membership. The necessity for numerous congregations in every community of considerable size makes it apparent that Christian union can never mean the inclusion of all residents in a single congregation under one roof. Even if there should come to be but one general type of Christianity, there would still be need for local congregations as a matter of convenience geographically and, also, as a matter of suiting the interpretation and practice of religion to the needs of different social classes, types of temperament and culture. Whenever a local congregation becomes conscious of the fact that it has freed itself from the narrower lines of religious affiliation in the interest of union and human service, it achieves a notable integration within itself and a definite sense of kinship with all other congregations of whatever name holding to the same general faith and purpose.

FROM SHARE CROPPER TO HOMESTEADER

Alva W. Taylor

G GOVERNOR FUTRELL of Arkansas has called a conference on the share-cropper situation. He is asking the governors of other cotton states to appoint delegates. Governor White, millionaire lumberman of Mississippi, says his state has no share cropper problem. That is about like a Pittsburger saying steel has no labor problem or a Hitlerite saying Germany has no Jewish problem. It also raises a question mark over the possible outcome of the conference. Will it result in a stale-mate as did President Wilson's industrial conference and as have so many others held on controversial questions with both extremes sitting in? There no doubt are landlords and tenants who could meet and conciliate the situation, but no one would ever expect Governor White and an officer of the share cropper union to do so. We suspect that the hope of the situation lies much less in Governor Futrell's conference than in disinterested forces of social understanding, such as those of socially minded "brain-trusters", the rural Resettlement experts and those forces of the social conscience represented in church and educational bodies who are not financially interested in the situation but whose whole interest is in economic equity and human welfare.

The writer tramped about Ireland in the bad old days of landlordism and wrote an article entitled "Slums in The Country". Ten years after the land purchase act became effective he did the same thing again and wrote on "The Greatest Constructive Social Experiment in History". The poor cotter had been converted into a homesteader, "rack-rent" had been eliminated, credit was furnished by the government at low interest rates, hovels were changed into decent cottages and the gloomy rural

Ireland of a decade before was beginning to smile.

There is nothing easier than for a complacent and socially ignorant mentality to dismiss the share cropper situation in the South as one of "lazy niggers" or "poor white trash", or, on the other hand, to charge it all up to "wicked landlords". There are lazy tenants and white croppers of low mentality and there are exploiting landlords, but most of them are made such by the situation. There are also croppers who become tenants and tenants who become owners in spite of the situation, and there are landlords who have sacrificed greatly to care for their tenants during the depression. But none of those furnish more than exceptions to the rule. The cotton tenant situation as a whole is bad, and its solution requires much deeper remedies than in making landlords benevolent or tenants industrious, much as those things will help.

The average cotton tenant works a farm of 36 acres, is a one-mule farmer, has the use of tools worth from \$40.00 to \$125.00, lives in a three or four room house that cost from \$300.00 to \$400.00 to construct, possesses a cow, a pig or two and from forty to fifty chickens; he makes a net income from year to year that averages from \$400.00 to \$600.00. The "tenant" who furnishes his own mule and tools and gets two-thirds, and may do a little better, but the "Share-cropper", who is "furnished" by the landlord and gets one-half, is nothing but a wage earner with no assurance as to what his wage will be; he necessarily fares more poorly.

The average production for all cotton farming last year was 188 pounds per acre. Inasmuch as the richer bottom lands and most of Texas produced above the average many on the poorer lands made much less. Just

for the sake of being a little more than fair, let us assume that the average good cropper will make 200 pounds this year. He, with the help of his family, wife and children all working in the fields in the planting, chopping and picking seasons—will thus produce 2,800 pounds, of which he will get one-half. If his fiber is good he will probably receive from eleven to twelve cents a pound for it. His gross intake will thus come to, say, \$175.00 from which ginning, half the cost of fertilizer (the landlord usually pays half on fertilizer) and any other expenses must be paid. This will be about all the cash he will receive unless he has been able to get some day wages between busy seasons in the cotton field. He will probably have lived on “store credit” for which he has paid about 20% interest or surcharges. The reader may judge as to how much chance he has to ever become an independent land owner as over against the predestination in his situation which makes “poor white trash” or a “lazy nigger” out of him. He is a victim of the one-cash-crop and of the credit system; and both he and the landlord are victims of unearned increment, that is, of speculative land values.

An illustration is found in Mississippi County, Arkansas. This rich delta county is a good sample of the situation in those sections of Arkansas where there has been most trouble and violence, though there has not been much in that county. It is used here because of a study made there, in which it was found that the average tenant acreage is twenty-two, the buildings on it are worth \$300.00 and the cropper's tools cost about \$40.00. His cultural condition was poorer than that of his brother on the poor red hills of Georgia where the price of the land is one-fourth as much. It is an old saying that “poor soil makes poor folks”; a new one could be coined to say that in the cotton country “rich land makes poor croppers”.

Is there no solution to this problem? There are 3,000,000 cotton growers, with their families averaging six persons, laboring under these depressed conditions. Couple this 18,000,000 with that of the southern wage earners who labor for from \$400.00 to \$700.00 per year and it is not difficult to see why the south as a whole remains poor; until these millions can buy the necessities of life there can be little prosperity for the south as a whole. The southern worker is just as capable, just as ambitious for his family, just as willing to work and save and invest and just as eager to prosper and raise the standard of living for his family as is any other American. A solution is offered in the experiments of the Resettlement Administration. Such homestead colonies as those at Lake Dick in Mississippi and at Dyess Colony in Mississippi County, Arkansas, are the experimental plots. The next ten years should tell the story just as it told it in Ireland.

There are three phases to the work of the Resettlement Administration. First, it is rehabilitating some 500,000 farm families who would have been on relief had

it not made them loans to enable them to continue farming. The average loan is about \$200.00, the average age of the farmer given it is in the early thirties; he is thus a good risk and all signs are that notwithstanding drouth and other things in the chances a farmer takes on illness, bad markets, insects and crop failures, more than 300,000 of them will pay out within two or three years. Those who do not would have been on relief, which would have cost more, so the expense to the government has not been increased by charging unpaid loans up to relief expenses. The second phase is that of readjusting mortgages to save foreclosure; more than \$60,000,000 in mortgages have been so adjusted as to save the hard working son of the soil from losing his earnings and savings of years. It is a tragic fact that a half million have lost their homes through foreclosure since the depression began.

The third phase of Resettlement's work is the one that offers hope for the solution of the tenant, cropper problem, and for the debt laden small farmer as well. It is that of reconstruction. Good productive land is purchased and the homesteader placed upon it with thirty years to pay out at a low interest rate. More than 20,000 modern small farm homes have been built or are under construction. The toil saving devices of water and plumbing are built in, and where available there is electric installation. A neat little home, with twenty acres of land, will cost about \$2,500. The tenant, now become a homesteader, will have 30 years to pay for it through annual payments amortized at little more than one-half the interest rate he would have to pay on a commercial real estate loan—and as he had no credit, he would have been unable to procure a commercial loan. The government sells billions in bonds at less than 3%; it could offer millions of tenants and mortgage burdened small farm owners a 4% rate and pay all expenses out of the extra 1%. Crop credit loans could be made at one-third that paid by the cotton cropper. Then, by insisting on expert supervision of farming, as the Resettlement does, scientific methods plus cheap credit would make repayment easy to any industrious farm family. Meanwhile they would have a neat home with modern, toil saving conveniences, an improved income plus a better standard of living, security of tenure as against the constant moving about of the average tenant, and each year their equity in the farm would increase.

In other words, through the planned and supervised help of all the people as represented in their government, the depressed and defeated millions among the farmers of our wealthy land, could be restored to that homesteading type of independence upon which rural America was builded. “Ownership turns sands into gold”, said an English landlord of the better type many years ago. Home ownership for the stranded southern tiller of the soil, if provision is made against the return of land speculation in the future, would redeem the tenant, and the key to it lies in low interest, long time payment and scientific farming.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY RELIGION?

By Lincoln MacKenzie

EVERY COMMUNITY, from rural to urban, is aware of institutional religion. The Church or Synagogue is the center and the object of support and adherence. To it one's loyalty and devotion are given or invited. But, there is not a church in America of any type which today is not hard pressed, not only to maintain itself as an institution, but to actually justify the time and expenditure consumed in its upkeep and perpetuation. Their leaders and supporters are aware that something is wrong or lacking.

It probably would be difficult to find a community where the religious institutions can claim one hundred per cent of the population. Indeed sixty per cent is in most places the nearer approximation.

One may not, therefore, infer that people are on the whole irreligious, or less religiously minded than they ever have been. The truth, undoubtedly, is just the reverse. But the people who are not supporters or adherents of religious institutions have either out-grown such a form of expression or they were never made aware of its values. Consequently, their religion is largely inhibited. They might even feel uncomfortable in a place of worship, and embarrassed when religious matters are presented.

The political expression of this attitude toward religion is today represented by Communism. It is then obvious how churchless people are passive exponents of a communistic philosophy of life. The serious aspect of this non-religious expression and participation is revealed in the *lack of spiritual discernment* and living so characteristic of the present age. Life for multitudes is lacking in any significant meaning or purpose. Beneath this lethargy of the soul is a passionate interest on the part of the masses in demagogues. It is always symptomatic of soul hunger when people thus seek salvation in terms of social and political panaceas. No informed person will wish to disagree with the statement that without the positive virtues which religion inculcates, we may not expect the kind of personal or social salvation of which men are perennially in need, inasmuch as unselfish public and private service is required in any successful social order. But this kind of character building is not possible by institutions which no longer are able to command or hold the respect of multitudes.

There is much clamor for individual freedom, but individual freedom that is not license, is alone possible when it is grounded in the knowledge born of spiritual enlightenment. This is an achievement in character development. How may freedom of action be restored to the individual whose liberty is circumscribed by adherence to semi-predatory groups? And it is no whit different or less compromising if the unit to which one gives one's interest and loyalty is political, social, fraternal or religious, so long as it remains one-sided and

sectarian in its conception. This condition obtains wherever the total good is not visualized, and as a result community loyalty and interest is reduced to a sophomoric attitude of vanity and affectation.

Furthermore, one's loyalty and interest should be so cultivated that its growth should not cease until it becomes inclusive of the country as a whole, and indeed of the world. Brotherhood worthy of the name is alone possible on such an actional, integrated and cooperative basis.

To promote understanding and appreciation of the spiritual values which are inherent in the processes and relationships of community life, and to relate them to the country and world at large, is a cause worthy of any man's utmost investment in money and service. This kind of enlistment would go a long way in the solution of our modern religious dilemma. We have designated it Community Religion because it implies that the community shall become the chief interest of one's loyalty and devotion. This, however, does not mean an initial disavowal of the secular and religious institutions in any given community; on the contrary it presupposes the inclusion of all the interests of a community by every local group whether religious or secular. The church that makes it effective vitalizes the religion of its adherents, and presents an opportunity for necessary constructive change.

Many communities are made divisive by numerous organizations which traffic in one way or another on the leisure time of hard-pressed individuals. When the sole object of one's loyalty is an organization the general welfare of a community necessarily suffers. Such divisiveness precludes cooperation. Yet no great or lasting good can be achieved without the co-operative spirit. When people work together, play together and strive for local or universal ends, there the true spirit and genius of religion is manifested.

To further this end communities may well provide for a leader who will act as a social engineer for the purpose of studying, correlating and integrating the forces so divisive in community life.

Such a leader could focus attention upon worthy ends, and by utilizing existing institutions these ends could be realized. Those best adapted for a given task would be charged with its commission. In this way such organizations will have an opportunity to determine their community value and to test their usefulness in the community. Extraneous and parasitic groups could be combined or redirected. All needs of community life regardless of race, sect or creed would receive attention, and organizations would be enlisted in cooperative effort to rectify conditions and to promote the good life. The end and object of all effort would be the creation of the Beloved Community.

FICTION FOR CHURCH FOLKS

FOR a good many years after I entered the ministry, I affected to despise the fiction literature of the time. I preferred learned tomes, whether I always understood them or not. Perhaps one subtle influence in getting me to read stories again was the fact that it was embarrassing to have some one ask me about a popular book I had never read. But as time went on, I had the same need of recreational reading as other tired Americans. At last I began to see that fiction is one of the big influences that shape the minds of my parishioners along with the newspaper, the movie and the radio. I can hardly know what is in the heads of my Sunday morning audiences unless I know the forces that create ideas and prejudices.

So I confess without shame that I read a good many novels in a year. Back in the days of disillusionment following the war this was a trial to my spirit. I waded through the novels of Sinclair Lewis, one by one, to see how far the cynical mood can carry a man. There was many a good hit. "Babbitt" seems to me the best of his creations, though perhaps my business men would prefer "Elmer Gantry." I read the books of this era in a mood of protest. Surely the human race made up of doctors, preachers, business men and women idealists is not so vile as he sees it. This muck was supposed to be "realism." I insisted in those days that true realism sees the good in life as well as the evil, the heroism of humanity as well as its cowardice.

Where are the literary cynics of that period? My public library does not circulate the Sinclair Lewis books very much any more. H. F. Mencken and all the tribe of traducers of the human race seem to have retired from the public stage.

I am not a literary critic nor the grand-nephew of one. But for me the greatest piece of fiction in ten years is "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh," by Franz Werfel. An exile from Germany, this Jew Werfel has

pondered long and deeply on the racial problem. The racial minorities of all the world have a champion in him. The reader is carried from one vivid moment to another. As a few thousand Armenian refugees make their final stand against the Turk on a mountain top determined to fight it out to the bitter end, communism is forced upon them. One after another of humanity's greatest problems are sketched with the boldest strokes. There is a hero, and the world is not done worshipping heroes yet.

Robert Rylee in "Deep, Dark River" takes us into the deep South. He is himself a Southerner, but has been educated in a northern university. Emancipated from his prejudices, he makes us love a negro preacher who has but little of the white man's morality but who has a real love of humanity and spiritual truth. A greater novel is Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind." One sees the Civil War from a woman's view-point. It was brought on by hot-headed politicians north and south. One sees why the South never had even a chance to win without access to the world's markets and without factories. The wrongs of the reconstruction period are made vivid to northern readers, and help us to understand why the "rebel yell" has never been forgotten in the South.

The problem novels of Josephine Lawrence seemed rather tedious to me in spite of my sympathy with her view-point, but they are socially useful. In "Years Are So Long" she talks of the sorrows of old age, before we had an old-age pension act. An old couple are separated, and boarded around among the children in such a way as never to see each other. "If I Had Four Apples" is an indictment of installment buying. Believing, as I do, that this way of securing household gadgets had much to do with our big depression, I hold with her, but could wish she would entertain me more as I travel along.

Of stories written against war, there have been many since the days of Tolstoi's "War and Peace." By far the most vivid is Arnold Zweig's "Education Before Verdun." If goose pimples will keep us from going into another war, this book should do the trick. It shows the horrible intrigue of war-time with men getting revenge on their enemies by putting them in the trenches. One smells the odors, and hears the hiss of the shrapnel. Not even a movie could fill one's mind with such terrible pictures. But will such books keep youth from thronging the recruiting offices? Perhaps the more the dangers of war are exploited, the more a certain type of youth will want to be a hero.

Books that carry me to distant parts of the earth and show me alien cultures never cease to be interesting. "Arctic Adventures," by Peter Freuchen, is a non-fiction book, but it beats most of my fiction. Its presentation of life among the Eskimos is vivid and realistic. D. Manners Sutton in his "Black God" shows me the heart of tropical Africa. A native sits on a river bank for almost a generation seeking revenge on a white man for a wrong. What happens in that generation, vividly portrays the epochal changes on the Congo. I see into the mind of the Congo country. Surely the man who wrote it must have been there. I compare it with a section in "Anthony Adverse" where the hero succumbs to the spell of the tropics.

Some philanthropists might well have made a tract of Ellen Glasgow's "Vein of Iron" in the worst of the depression. I quite fell in love with the old heretic preacher who lost his church, and then his village school, and stood in a soup line when the great philosopher of Germany called to praise him for his latest book of philosophy. Nothing the depression could do could conquer his Promethean spirit.

Professors have been trying to write novels lately. I was mildly

entertained by Goodspeed's "The Curse in the Colophon," which is a very gentlemanly mystery story with no murder in it. Santayana's "The Last Puritan" is not much of a novel, but quite a book of philosophy. His characters all talk like Santayana, and there is little of literary artistry in it. I am not enough of a philosopher to appraise the book. Is man shut up to a choice

between being a prude or a libertine in his morals? Must one be a shameless individualist dying in one's own sins, or on the other hand, a frustrated victim of social conventions?

In all this period where is the great religious novel? The one that got into the "best-seller" class is Lloyd C. Douglas' "Green Light." It is good after the days of "Elmer

Gantry" to have some one draw so lovable a figure as that of the old Dean who is the ideal pastoral counsellor. He is a human substitute for Divine providence, and pulls the strings until everybody gets married and lives happy ever afterwards. It is amateurish, but of wholesome human feeling there is a lot, and I am glad the book went over.

O. F. JORDAN.

WAYS OF WORKING

Getting Larger Attendance At Sunday School

ONCE the major interest of Sunday schools across America was in the matter of attendance. Contests, prizes and various devices were employed and one big excitement succeeded another, to be followed in each instance by decline. This revivalistic psychology applied to Sunday schools became thoroughly discredited. There has followed a period when schools complacently take what children appear at the building, and are probably too little concerned about the children that never go to Sunday school and about those whose attendance is very irregular.

It is obvious that there is not much use in trying to promote an institution without merit. Unless a Sunday school has developed a system of teaching worthy of commendation, adopted a proper curriculum, secured good teachers and developed an uplifting worship, it will never become a great Sunday school by any processes of promotion. But even the best of Sunday schools may fail to secure the number of children that could be well taught unless it is concerned with its recruiting processes.

One half of the children of America secure no religious education. So long as this is true, it is obvious that all is not well with religious education. This article will be devoted to the matter of recruiting and holding the material for the school, while recognizing that there are other and more important con-

cerns that must have been first considered.

A survey of Sunday school material is seldom made either by a single parish church, or by churches acting together. Nobody knows just how many children there are outside the reach of the educational processes of the church. The methods of doing one of these surveys may not be so burdensome. In some instances the public school officials will allow an abstract of the names of pupils to be made. These should be copied, and each minister and priest in town should write against each name his claims of parish influence. That will leave the unclaimed names which should be given to each church. When a child is claimed by two churches, this should be left to negotiation between the religious leaders. A group of these claims can often be compromised. The unclaimed children should then be visited, and enlisted as far as possible.

When the cooperation of the public schools cannot be enlisted, sometimes one may secure a list of water users from the city hall. The typed lists would then be subject to claims made as before. Then the unclaimed families visited for children.

Naturally every church that is in earnest about this business will survey its own families for children that are not going to Sunday school. Astounding as the fact is, nearly every church will find a few children in its own families not getting religious instruction.

The matter of regular attendance

is one quite as serious as that of enlistment. Statistics show that the attendance in the average Sunday school is about sixty per cent of its enrolment, on any given average Sunday. Compare this with the attendance in public school and one realizes that illness accounts for but little of the failure to attend.

Why do children not go? In many instances because of the lack of interest of the parents. These do not get up in time on Sunday morning to get the children off. They plan junkets with the family auto. Or they just do not care.

Once the public school was confronted with a great indifference toward its program. It has developed the PTA movement which has become one of the most powerful organizations in local community life in America. It would be admirable if the PTA could be induced to include religious education within its scope. If that be impossible, then the church may need to try to develop a similar cooperation with its parents. A start might be made with a Sunday afternoon tea in the social parlors to which the parents of a single department are invited to meet the teachers of their children. If each department of the school had three of these meetings a year, it would help a good deal. A short talk on the child problems of the children might be included.

If this will not work, then the teachers, accompanied each by some other adult, should make a visitation of the school. An every-member-canvass of the Sunday

school, not for money but for cooperation and good-will, has proven to be of great usefulness. It will invariably increase the average attendance of a school for a considerable period.

That we need a literature to sell religious education to parents, is obvious. The various denominational publishing houses do have tracts, some of which might be used for this purpose. In smaller communities the newspaper may be induced to publish brief news articles, or even an excerpt from an address by the pastor in which he sets forth the reason for his faith in educational processes in religion.

The boys and girls themselves are the most effective recruiting agent for the local schools. If the matter is stressed at the proper season of the year, they will bring in new boys and girls in considerable numbers. They need to be cautioned against bringing in boys and girls from other schools.

A school whose classes have mid-week activities is more apt to have a good attendance on Sunday. The school needs to be welded into a social unit with esprit de corps.

Call New Minister

REV. Herman Crawford has been called as the new minister of Community church at Gilman, Iowa. He began his ministry there on November 8. This church was formerly a Congregational church, but reorganized itself as a Community church four years ago.

Faithful Sunday School Attendance

THE Sunday School of St. Paul's Union Church of Chicago attended church in a body on October 18 at which time the Superintendent of the school, F. E. Reynolds, presented 44 Cross and Crown awards for faithful attendance in the school. Two young persons had been in attendance for 17 years and another for 13 years. At this service Dr. W. W. Iliffe, the pastor, preached on "What to do When Trouble Comes."

On December 13 the church choir, under the direction of Miss Martha Dettinger is to present a service entirely from Handel's Messiah.

Has Youth Choir

UNION church of Tekonsha, Michigan, has a Youth Choir made up of young people of ages twelve to twenty-five. The new pastor of this church is Rev. Levant R. Wheaton, who spoke to the young people recently on the theme, "When Winter Comes."

Vote On Most Popular Hymn

THE congregation of Federated church at MacDonald, Kansas, recently voted on the favorite hymn in their hymn book. The hymn entitled "The Beautiful Garden of Prayer" was first choice and "The Old Rugged Cross" was a close second. At a recent Sunday evening service the hymns that had received the largest number of votes were included in a special song service. Charles G. Roe is pastor of this church. The church bulletin of this congregation makes a list in a recent issue, of problems facing the church. These are named as: "The

rising tide of irreligion", "Religious and Biblical ignorance", "Maintaining spirituality in church members", "Rising tide of secularism", "Winning youth to Christ", "The war system", "What is a Christian economic order", "The divisions of the Church", "Temperance", "Indifference of the multitude", and "The sense of aimlessness".

Change Plan of Work

FOR a number of years there was a Federated church at Plainview, Minnesota, composed of Methodist and Congregational units. There grew up some disagreement in the federation owing to a demand that the church always have a Methodist minister. The result has been a complete reorganization of forces

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there and the calling of Marshall R. Olson a Presbyterian minister from Marshfield, Wisconsin. The situation in the church was studied by the state comity committee of Minnesota and the newly formed Community church will have an affiliation with the presbytery but under a constitution which keeps final authority in the local church. The prospects of a vigorous church life following this reorganization are good.

Works at Sunday Evening Problem

VERDETTE WALTERS, pastor of Berkeley Community Church, Denver, Colorado, maintains Sunday evening service in his church, but with a quite varied program. In his announcements for the autumn time are dramatic productions, guest speakers, pictures and many other interesting features. This church celebrated its twentieth anniversary in September.

New Church Near Los Angeles

A NEW organization called the Village Church of Brentwood Park has been formed near Los Angeles, California. A number of small communities in the area are interested in the church. The first meeting was held on October 18 in the Hollywood Military Academy. The church announces that its services are to be nonsectarian, inspirational, spiritual and universal. Dr. Frank Dyer, who has had a family residence in this area for 14 years, has acted as the counselor of the church and at the present time is preaching for them.

Serves Sunday Dinner

AVALON Park Community Church of Chicago, has an occasional Sunday dinner served in the community hall which adjourns the church. On a recent Sunday this was provided by the Men's Club of the church. The minister serving the Avalon Park church is Rev. E. H. Koster.

Will Make Dramatic Offering

REV. H. Butler Fairman, the assistant pastor of Clay Township, St. Joseph County, Indiana, is drilling the young people of the church to present a dramatic production "The Great Choice". A recent feature of the life of the church has been the coming of choir members from a large number of churches in the county. The excellent music given by these choirs has resulted in overflowing congregations on Sunday evenings, even on nights when it rained.

Dr. Joseph Myers Goes To Dayton

DR. JOSEPH MYERS, a member of the board of the Community Church Workers who has been serving with the Emergency Peace Campaign, began work as an editorial writer on the Dayton Journal and Herald, November 2. Dr. Myers was formerly connected with a leading newspaper in Indianapolis before becoming the assistant pastor of Linwood Community Church, of Kansas City, Mo.

New Pastor For Rio Hondo

REV. W. Francis Craig of Lorraine, Illinois, has accepted a call to the Community Church of Rio Hondo, Texas. He graduated in 1935 from the Vanderbilt School of

Religion. He has organized a young people's society in his church which had 40 present at the initial meeting. The church attendance has also enlarged this fall.

A Christmas Party Suggestion

AS THE Christmas season approaches, many Ladies' Aid Societies wish to remember a group of children, or possibly some mission project in their community, and are looking for some way whereby they can earn a little money to finance it.

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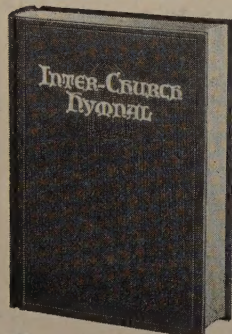
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Here is what our Women's Bible Class does each year for just such a project. We are interested in an Italian Settlement House and our big donation goes to them, a certain sum for each year, which is paid at Christmas time. Then we are also interested in the Sunday School of a colored church mission and wish to remember these children in some way.

In order that each member in the class may share, red or green tarleton stockings about 6 to 8 inches long are made by the committee in charge. These are attractively blanket stitched in contrasting color. Into each one is placed a little invitation in verse, giving the time and place and purpose of our party, which is held about a week to 10 days before Christmas. They are

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asked to place money in the stocking and either bring or send it to the party.

Our class room is prettily decorated with festoons, a tree and red candles in fancy candle holders around the room, furnish the light. The tree may be donated for the occasion by a member who will use it later in her own home, or sometimes we purchase the tree and pass it on to one of the departments in the Sunday school for their use. A program is arranged consisting of Christmas songs to be sung by the group, solos and possibly a reading, and a march at which time each person deposits his stocking into a chimney which is arranged on a "snow bedecked" table. Then as a final number we present a one act play, selecting one that is easily staged. (Suggestions will be cheerfully given).

Refreshments are served by a committee; cocoa and home made

Christmas cookies, or ginger bread with whipped cream topped off with a red cherry, and candy.

After payment of our pledge for the Italian Settlement, the balance of the money is used to buy candy to fill the stockings which are sent to the Colored Mission. One year we each brought a 10c toy; at another time one of the boys' groups in the church mended hurt toys that were donated and these were sent with the stockings. Last year one of the boys made jig saw puzzles for each child. (Of course we knew how many children to provide for and the average age.)

Senior C. E. Topics

Dec. 6.—Planning My Christmas Giving. Prov. 19:17. (Consecration meeting).

Dec. 13—My Appreciation of the Jew. Isa. 9:6 ; Luke 1:68-79.

Dec. 20—"The Christmas Carol," by Dickens. Prov. 14:21; Ps. 41:1.

Dec. 27—The Log of 1936. Deut. 8:1-5.

Sunday School Lessons

Dec. 6—Paul's Parting Counsels. I Tim. 6:6-16; II Tim. 4:16-18.

Dec. 13—John's Vision on Patmos. Rev. 1:4-18.

Dec. 20—The Supreme Gift of Love (Christmas Lesson). I John 4:7-19.

Dec. 27—Review: The Spread of Christianity in Southern Europe. Heb. 2:1-4; 11:32 to 12:2.

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